(d) Based on the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) security manual, there is a National Civil Aviation Security Programme at the national level. At the airport level, each airport has an Airport Security Programme and Contingency Plan on handling aircraft hijack situation. As per the existing guidelines various security procedures like pre-embarkation security check of passengers and baggages, enforcement of access control at airport and to the aircraft, Anti-sabotage check of the aircraft etc. are adhered to by the security agencies for security of all aircrafts flying out.

Merger of Indian and Air India

2267. SHRI SHANTARAM LAXMAN NAIK:
SHRI SYED AZEEZ PASHA:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the much talked-about merger of Indian and Air India has taken place;

(b) if so, the essential features of the agreement;

(c) the benefits, if any, that passengers travelling by the air services of the two companies are going to derive;

(d) whether employees have agreed to the merger; and

(e) the details referring to the safeguard of employees, stipulated, if any, in the agreement?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) The Government has decided to merge Air India and Indian Airlines into a new company in a phased manner over the next two years. The technical and procedural formalities for merging the two airlines have begun and one company with one name, brand and logo is expected to be in place within the coming 16 weeks. The new company will have a large aircrafts fleet, with both international and domestic footprint, setting fresh benchmarks for efficiency and reliability. It is estimated that the merger would result in net benefit of Rs. 600 crores at the end of third year of merger.

(c) The merged airline would be able to offer an integrated schedule from interior points in India (currently served by Indian) to various international destinations (currently served by Indian and/or Air India) and vice-versa, offering seamless connectivity to passengers and also extending the connectivity of interior points to various international destinations *via* the major airports hub in India. The induction of new aircraft in the coming years would further benefit the passengers by way of improved service.

(d) and (e) The employees interests have been foremost while taking this decision. Consultations have been held with the Employee Unions of both Air India and Indian Airlines and the Government is committed to ensure that all legitimate employee interests, are protected. There will be no retrenchment and all employees will continue in the merged company. Besides, to keep the exercise as smooth as possible, the integration of manpower would be completed in a phased manner, on the basis of transparent and objective criteria. A well defined Grievance Redressal Machinery will also be put in place for this purpose.

Expert Committee to make Indian profitable

2268. SHRI PRASANTA CHATTERJEE:
SHRI TAPAN KUMAR SEN:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether any Expert Committee has been constituted by Government to formulate strategies to make Indian profitable;

(b) if so, the names of the members of the Expert Committee;

(c) whether the Committee has submitted any report; and

(d) if so, the details of the recommendations?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (d) Do not arise.